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# ***LABOUR ORGANISER***

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## Situations Vacant

**THE LABOUR PARTY REQUIRES AN ORGANISING ASSISTANT FOR THE LIVERPOOL AREA.** Application forms and conditions of appointment are obtainable from the National Agent, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Application forms must be returned to the National Agent not later than 22nd August, 1958.

**BELPER C.L.P.** requires the services of a full-time Secretary/Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement, but higher salary to a qualified and experienced person. Housing accommodation could be made available. Application forms from Mr. D. J. Robertson, The Labour Hall, New Road, Belper, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th September, 1958.

**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Agent. The appointment will be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the National Agent Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th August, 1958.

**CENTRAL NORFOLK C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Agent. Car available and financial help for house mortgage will be considered. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 23rd August, 1958.

**RUTHERGLEN C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Agent. The appointment will be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 29th August, 1958.

**COLNE VALLEY C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. The appointment will be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th August, 1958.

**SUDBURY AND WOODBRIDGE C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Assistant Organiser, man or woman, to do field work in a large Rural Area. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Starting salary £560. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. J. Roberts, 33 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, to whom they should be returned not later than 29th August, 1958.

**GLOUCESTER C.L.P.** invites applications for the post of full-time Assistant Organiser. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. F. Davenport, 115 Barton Street, Gloucester, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th August, 1958.

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# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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## More Members

WHEN the final figures are announced, it is almost certain that they will show a big increase in the individual membership of the Labour Party in 1957. This was not unexpected, because the new rule, imposing on Constituency Labour Parties a minimum affiliation fee based on 800 members, came into operation last year.

Previously the minimum was based on 240 members, and there were quite a number of parties taking only that number of cards, and there were many more taking less than 800. All of them now have to pay for 800 members at least, and that fact alone would cause a substantial increase in the figures compared with past years.

Even assuming that none of these parties increased its membership at all in 1957, the figures will still show that there has been a substantial increase in the real membership of the Party. But that assumption would not be correct, since it is known that many parties with memberships below the minimum made strenuous efforts to improve their position and had considerable success.

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Indeed, that was the chief purpose of increasing the minimum affiliation. Many parties, some in strong Labour seats, had very small memberships and they were not making the contribution to the Party nationally that was its due. (For many years the *average* Constituency Labour Party membership has been over 1,300.) Not only has the minimum affiliation been

increased, but also there has been an increase of 50 per cent in the charge made for each card, so that a party now has to pay at least £30, compared with only £6 previously. Few parties can afford to pay 9d. each for any number of cards unless most of them are taken out by members. Hence their commendable efforts to increase membership last year.

The national increase is likely to be both large and the total figures only a little less accurate than those of past years. This is a most welcome sign. For three years up to 1956, the individual membership fell each year. In 1956 the decline was stopped and a slight increase was registered. Last year's increase was not the result of a spectacular national campaign. It represents a steady increase in Party strength, and it is not without significance that much of the increase has taken place in marginal constituencies.

In the columns of the *Labour Organiser* recently there has been discussion about the value of a big membership. It may even be, as one contributor argued, that above a certain level members become an embarrassment, but there are too many parties still below that level and are without the membership needed to supply them with sufficient active workers. A membership representing 10 per cent of the Labour vote has been considered for a long time as a reasonable aim. If that aim were achieved the Party would have a total of 1,250,000 individual members.

A membership as big as that would bring additional money into the Party funds, locally and nationally, and would provide the active support so much needed for the battles ahead.

Len Sims points out the danger of breaking the law when nursing a constituency before an election

# Candidates, watch the law!

*"There is a world of difference between supporting a cause and supporting a candidate."—Lord Sankey (Berwick-on-Tweed Election Petition, 1923).*

THESE words crystallise the principle upon which judges decide whether or not certain expenses incurred are in respect of normal party political propaganda, or are expenses incurred in promoting a candidature.

To judges the 'world of difference' becomes apparent after hearing the facts, both for and against, the particular case that comes before them. To the ordinary party member, or the prospective Parliamentary candidate, or anyone active in political affairs, the difference between party and personal propaganda is not always clear, and it is quite easy to get the two confused. It is for this reason care must be exercised, especially as there is the possibility of a General Election in the not too distant future.

As most constituency parties have selected their prospective Parliamentary candidates, there is a natural desire to stimulate political activity. It is also natural for the prospective Parliamentary candidate to play a leading role. This being the case, it is necessary to try and keep quite clear of incurring any expense which might be classified as an election expense.

## PROMOTE CANDIDATE

First, it must be understood that 'election expenses' do not necessarily commence with the election, but with the promotion of the interests of the candidate. The fact that a person is publicised as 'prospective' Labour candidate does not mean that he is safe to incur expenses and thereby advance his candidature.

The word 'prospective' is an indica-

tion to the public that he has been selected by the particular party as the person who will in all probability contest the next election. Having defined the word 'prospective' it will be easier to refer to the prospective candidate as the candidate and so avoid any confusion of terms.

Judges have resolutely refused to lay down any principle from which the commencement of the election may be determined. The decision, they hold, must rest on the facts arising from each case. 'Parker', on page 120, says: '... the safest course is to consider that the election has commenced as soon as any definite step is taken in respect of the candidature or preparation for or towards the conduct or management of, the election by any particular person'. (Stepney, 4 O'M. & H. 38.)

## DANGEROUS PUBLICITY

What kind of expenses are most likely to bring a party to the point of contravening the law? Unhesitatingly I would say publicity surrounding their candidate. In our desire to give every advantage to the candidate, to get him known in all parts of the constituency, we can easily publicise him and his activities in such a way as to make it a personal appeal. There can be posters, and leaflets, which invite people to come and hear the candidate, or invite electors to write or meet him. Such printed material can easily come within the compass of an election expense.

There can be posters printed which not only state the fact that Blank is the prospective Parliamentary candidate, but also displays his photograph. These might well be considered an election expense, especially if the rest of the wording on the poster is really incidental to the main features.



Another case which might cause difficulty could arise from the desire of a constituency party to get their newly-selected candidate known. This might be done by producing a special message setting out his biographical details. It would not avoid being personal publicity by just adding an application form for Party membership. A special membership drive might be planned, and it is thought that it presents an admirable opportunity to have a leaflet printed which announces the fact that a candidate has been selected, and gives his biographical details.

### EMBARRASSING SITUATION

There was a case in which a newly-selected candidate inserted political advertisements in a local newspaper at regular intervals. Unfortunately, on one occasion reference was made to supporting him. This resulted in the opposing side immediately writing to say that, in view of the wording of the advertisement, it was assumed that the candidate had commenced his election. In a marginal seat such a situation could be most embarrassing.

It is instances such as those mentioned above that show how careful we must be in the way we approach this question of presenting a candidate. The closer the General Election comes the greater the possibility of infringing electoral law.

Perhaps the best interpretation in trying to differentiate between the promotion of the interests of a party and an individual is given by Baron Pollock, a judge of great experience in trying election cases, who said:

... I for one would wish it to be distinctly understood that if there be a political association upon the one side or upon the other, whose character is permanent — who from month to month and from year to year are industrious in watching the register, correcting it, influencing people to get their names put upon the register, and are holding meetings and gatherings for that purpose, it is not to be too

hastily assumed that because an election takes place at some particular period, every act which is done by the association, although it may be perhaps necessary in the furtherance of the election, makes that association, or the different members of it, necessarily agents for the candidate; in other words, that although the acts of the members of such an association may result in their becoming, from the very necessity of the case, agents of a candidate, these acts which are otherwise innocent, and which would be done whether there was an election or not, do not necessarily become criminal because their indirect effect may extend beyond what was the original intention and object which prompted them. It is not because an election takes place that a political association should hold its hand from going on its steady course with regard to the register and other matters, but at the same time, no doubt this modern form of organisation must be, and one might say ought to be, very powerful in the arrangement and encouragement of a constituency to take any particular view with regard to an election that is coming forward, and *the moment it appears that the candidate or his agent adopt either individually or collectively the work that is done by that association, in such a manner as to benefit by its agency quoad (with respect to) the election, then I should look upon this sort of organisation with very grave suspicion and I would be the very first to say the agency had been proved.*

The position of the sitting Member of Parliament differs somewhat from that of a prospective candidate. The Member possesses rights and duties towards his constituents which involve his making more or less frequent contact with them. Some of these rights and duties have, however, come under the consideration of election judges when it has been thought that the purpose was, in effect, to promote the

*continued on page 153*

# 35 YEARS AN AGENT: RETIRING

by H. R. Underhill

**T**HIRTY-FIVE years as a full-time organiser, and with the same party throughout! That is the splendid record of Alderman George Hodgkinson, O.B.E., who this month retires from the position of secretary to the Coventry Borough Labour Party.

George Hodgkinson joined the I.L.P., and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the forerunner of the A.E.U., in Preston in 1913. He has remained a member of the A.E.U. ever since, and his continued close association with the trade unions greatly assisted his work as party organiser.

On coming to Coventry in August, 1914, he soon became a shop steward at the Daimler Works and then secretary of the Shop Stewards Committee. He attended conferences which negotiated shop stewards recognition in Coventry in 1917. During the 1926 General Strike he was a member of the Council of Action and secretary of its publicity committee.

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George Hodgkinson's approach to life and his political work is illustrated by his membership of the Adult School Movement when only a youth in 1910, and as a teacher at a Quaker Sunday School from 1915 to 1918. After the last war he was actively associated with the 'Lidice shall Live' Campaign and was awarded the Medal of the White Lion of the Czechoslovakia Republic in 1947.

His first office in the Labour Party was as secretary to the Radford ward committee in Coventry during the 1918 General Election, when Dick Wallhead was the candidate. He then went to Ruskin College for two years. On 23rd October, 1923, shortly after his return, he started his long run as party organiser, when he was appointed full-time agent to A. A. Purcell, who won the Coventry seat for the first time.

George Hodgkinson soon displayed

keen interest in local affairs and in 1921 contested the Radford ward. He had seven successive contests in this same ward before he was elected to the city council in 1928.

He has remained a member of the council ever since; was elected an alderman in 1937, and has been chairman of the Housing, Gas and Finance Committees. He was Lord Mayor in 1944/45.

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George became Leader of the Council Group in the first year of Labour's majority in 1937. This year the Coventry party is to celebrate the 21st anniversary of first directing affairs in the city.

During the War he was chairman of the National Emergency Committee, and became chairman of the Emergency Repairs and Co-ordinating Committee after the Coventry blitz. He also served on other war-time committees.

He played a large part in Coventry's imaginative post-war re-development and since 1945 has been chairman of the Planning and Re-development Committee.

Although today it is generally regarded as undesirable for full-time agents to serve on local authorities, in those early days circumstances were different, and the people of Coventry, and the party, owe much to the work and inspiration which George Hodgkinson contributed to civic affairs.

George acted as agent at all nine General Elections since 1923, and prominently assisted at most by-elections in the Midlands until recent years.

He has seen Coventry grow at an amazing rate, and has ensured that the party kept abreast of this rapid development. There was only one Parliamentary constituency, when in 1945 two constituencies were created. Such was the increase of population that in 1950 the present three constituencies were set up, all being won and since held by Labour.



Coventry Labour Party now has its own three-storey headquarters at Coundon Road, but is contemplating plans for new premises in the city centre. A second organiser was appointed in 1949, and in latter years there has been full-time clerical assistance.

How can one fully assess George Hodgkinson's effect on the development of the party in Coventry? Space does not permit a full account of his vast organising work, but his contact with the trade union movement, his profound local government knowledge and administrative ability all played their part. But above all has been his sterling integrity and his unswerving faith in Socialism and the Labour movement.

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Always honest and straight with his party, he never courted popularity when straight talking was needed. Colleagues sometimes disagreed with him, but he always held their respect.

He always endeavoured to keep himself abreast of policy and organisational changes. Although a full-time officer for 35 years, he never ceased to nurture the voluntary work of others.

George Hodgkinson now leaves the position he has held with such distinction for 35 years. His will not be idle retirement, for he will continue with his extensive local government and public work.

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## **N.E.C. APPROVE NINE AGENCY APPOINTMENTS**

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**T**HE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

**MR. C. BURROWS** to **Brighton-Kemptown**. Cecil Burrows, aged 37, has been a full-time agent for 8½ years, six years at Bromsgrove and 2½ years at Wood Green. During this period he has also assisted, in a full-time capacity, at several by-elections. Prior to joining the agency ranks he was an active worker in the Rugby constituency.

**MR. G. E. CHEESEMAN** to **Sevenoaks**. George Cheeseman is 55 years of age and has been a member of the Party for 36 years. During the past few months he acted as organiser in the local government elections in Dover and Deal. He has been an active member of U.S.D.A.W. for 34 years.

**MR. T. W. COOK** to **Bury St. Edmunds**. A carpenter by trade. Thomas Cook, of Hailsworth in Suffolk, has been secretary of a local Labour Party for the past four years. Elected to the local authority in 1955 he was the first Labour councillor ever to be returned for that area. He is 34 years of age.

**MR. M. T. DAVIES** to **Norwich**. Maldwyn Davies, of Merthyr Tydfil, has been appointed as Assistant Organiser to the Norwich City Labour Party. He is 24 years of age.

**MR. W. G. THOM** to **Wembley South**. Bill Thom, a butcher, aged 34, fills the new agency post at Wembley South. On completing the Training Course for Agents he assisted, in a full-time capacity, at the by-elections in North Lewisham and Hornsey. At the 1955 General Election he acted as election agent in Wembley South.

**MR. R. E. WYATT** to **Southall**. Bob Wyatt, London District Secretary of the Agents' Union, moves to Southall after 13 years' service at Greenwich. He is 57 years of age and has been a member of the Party for 30 years.

**MR. A. H. AMIS** to **North Norfolk**. Arthur Amis has been a member of the Party for 14 years, and has been a member of the North Norfolk Party Executive Committee. At 50 years of age, he takes over from Jock Watson, who has retired, after many years as agent, because of bad health.

**MR. R. R. LEE** to **Shipley**. For the past five years Reg Lee has been a full-time agent at Ripon. He is 34 years of age and has been a member of the Party for eight years. He has done excellent work in this most difficult constituency and now is to apply his ability and experience to win back the Shipley seat for Labour.

**MR. F. J. SHIRLEY** to **Central Ayrshire**. A welder by trade, Frank Shirley is 41 years old. He takes over the post of agent in one of the best organised Scottish constituencies. The appointment is a token of the Party's determination to regain Central Ayrshire.

# SEQUEL TO OSBORNE JUDGMENT

by S. E. Barker

THE Temperance Hall, Leicester was the scene of the 1911 Annual Conference, and was presided over by W. C. Robinson.

For the first time there was a serious decline in membership, from 1,486,308 to 1,430,539. The total of affiliated trade unions fell from 172 to 151. The decrease both in affiliations and membership was considered to be solely due to the Osborne Judgment, which settled that a union had no power to engage in any action, including political action, except that specified in the definition clause of the Acts of 1871 and 1876.

## Court Injunctions

As a consequence of this judgment, 22 societies were taken into court. Injunctions were issued forbidding them to continue with practices which some trade unions had carried on for over 40 years.

These decisions affected the official position of 20 Members of Parliament, whose unions could no longer subscribe to the Labour Party Parliamentary Fund, from which maintenance grants were paid to Members of Parliament.

Nevertheless, the National Executive Committee decided that it would continue to pay maintenance to these Members of Parliament, believing that it would be the strong desire of the whole movement that they should not suffer financially.

When the Osborne Judgment was first given many trade unions did not appreciate its full meaning. It was not until injunction after injunction that the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Committee were able to drive home the full significance of the judgment.

On 30th April, 1910, the Parliamentary Labour Party had been successful in the ballot and brought

before the House the following motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the right to send representatives to Parliament and to Municipal administrative bodies, and to make financial provision for their election and maintenance enjoyed by trade unions for over 40 years, and taken from them by the decision in the case of *Osborne v. Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants*, should be restored.

The Attorney General, Sir William Robson, replied very unsympathetically on behalf of the Liberal Government and hinted that the alternative was payment of Members of Parliament. The Parliamentary Labour Party was not accepting that as an answer to their case. It pointed out that the payment of Members of Parliament was an issue which could stand on its own merits, and that the Osborne Judgment went far beyond the monetary issue. It had done a grave injustice to the trade unions and to Labour representation.

## Joint Board

The joint board representing the Labour and Trade Union movements carried a resolution on 28th August, 1910, which in forceful language made the following assertions:

1. That the Osborne Judgment did not merely affect Parliamentary representation, but made it impossible for trade union branches to join in the work of local trades councils, and struck at the freedom of discussion which had been enjoyed by the Trades Union Congress in so far as that Congress had taken action of a political character in the interests of the wage earners.
2. That it denied the right of trade unions to carry out their normal statutory purpose of 'regulating the relations between employers and employed', in so far as modern conditions of industry and the highly organised state of capital rendered Parliamentary action necessary for this purpose.
3. That it deprived trade unions of a



freedom and a right which they had enjoyed for nearly 50 years and which they had exercised only with the approval of their members, and to the advantage of the community.

The resolution called for the restoration of these rights in order that trade unionism might be put in a position to fulfil its statutory functions.

It deplored the Government's decision not to grant facilities for the consideration of a Bill during the session which would restore these rights to trade unions, nor to give a guarantee that it would fulfil its pledge to provide for the payment of Members.

It called upon all affiliated organisations to co-operate in enlightening the public on the Osborne Judgment, to approach Parliamentary representatives on the subject, and to urge all members of trade unions and the Labour Party to make the judgment a test question at all elections.

The tide began to turn. The campaign greatly influenced the public. The injustices of the situation began to be recognised. The decision of the Trades Union Congress, held in Sheffield that year, proved that the Trade Union movement was almost unanimous in its determination to secure the reversal of the decision.

Finally, the conference held in the Caxton Hall on 10th November, 1910, which wound up the Joint Committee's Campaign, added to the power of Labour's challenge.

### **Appointed Delegation**

This conference appointed a delegation to meet the Prime Minister. On 22nd November, in reply to a question in the House, Mr. Asquith made the following statement:

I have already indicated the intention of the Government in regard to payment of Members and official election expenses. We shall further propose legislation empowering Trade Unions to include in their objects and organisation the provision of a fund for Parliamentary and municipal action and representa-

tion and kindred objects, and to combine for such purposes, provided that the opinion of the Union is effectively ascertained, and that there shall be no compulsion upon any member to contribute to this fund.

The Labour movement was not at all sure of the meaning of these words. Nevertheless, it had won the first round in the battle, and the Parliamentary Labour Party prepared for the next challenge, determined to restore to the trade unions the liberties to which they were entitled.

### **Two By-Elections**

Two by-elections were fought in 1910. A. G. Cameron of the Carpenters and Joiners, failed to win Kirkdale by 841 votes. He was faced with an impossible situation created by the religious passions roused by the King's Declaration Bill.

Vernon Hartshorn, an official of the South Wales Miners, who later was to become Postmaster General in the first Labour Government, failed to win Glamorgan by 2,710 votes. The failure here was placed at the door of bad organisation.

During that year the Parliamentary Labour Party suffered losses through the deaths of Pete Curran, Member for Jarrow, and Tom Summerbell, Member for Sunderland.

Pete Curran was born of Irish parents, in Glasgow, in 1860. At the age of ten his schooldays were over, and he was earning a living as a junior hammer driver in a blacksmith's shop.

Tom Summerbell was born at Seaham Harbour in 1861. He was the son of a miner, and attended school until he was twelve years of age. He started his working life in a grocer's shop, but he tired very soon and next tried his hand in the printing trade, where he was a success. Older readers of the *Labour Organiser* will recall the early advertisements of Thomas Summerbell.

There is an interesting paragraph in the National Agent's report on municipal elections. Labour had made a nett gain of thirty-three seats in the boroughs, but apparently there had been fewer candidates in the field than in previous years, and the Party was experiencing great difficulty in securing suitable candidates who were able to obtain the necessary time from work.

# IS YOUR PARTY

**T**HE date of the next General Election is now a subject of speculation in the Press. Both October next and May, 1959, have been mentioned, though this Parliament can go on until early 1960.

There is something to be gained by the Tories from an early contest. Though there is little they can find to shout about in the most recent by-election results, it is obvious that the complete disintegration of the Tory Party in the constituencies, which seemed a possibility all the way from Tonbridge to Rochdale, is not now going to happen and that a sufficient number of Tory voters will back Macmillan when the time comes to hold the safe Tory seats.

If by a concerted organising and publicity effort they can rally the waverers and the apathetic Tory voters in the marginal constituencies, then the risk of going to the country next October or May is likely to be less than if they waited until the effects of the American recession were felt more severely in Britain.

The desperate attempts of Tory newspapers to create the impression of growing prosperity, and to turn the Prime Minister into a popular figure are straws in the wind, as are the changes at Tory Central Office and the intensive organising activity in many marginal constituencies.

## Surprise Opponents

Macmillan will decide when the General Election will be and obviously he will try to take his opponents by surprise. If the Labour Party is not prepared for the struggle, whenever it may come, it can only blame itself, and

there should not be a Constituency Labour Party that is not ready to enter the fray at any time.

The rebuilding of organisation after the 1955 defeat has gone on steadily for more than two years and the results have been reflected in local election victories. But there is now need for a speeding up of activities, especially in completing the marked register, and for the undertaking of the preparatory work that has to be done before entering a General Election.

There is a great deal of preparation required to ensure a successful campaign, but much of this can be done without starting the election, with all the legal embarrassments that that entails.

## Train Workers

Whatever system of recording canvass results and calling up supporters is introduced, material has to be prepared and workers trained in its use. The election agent and other key personnel have to be found, money has to be raised, and Party members made conscious of the possibility of being called to early action.

Most constituencies have chosen their candidate and nominated their election agent and many have made a start with their election funds, but so far a sense of urgency has been lacking and few have got down to the details of election preparation.

It is true that rigid plans made too far ahead may not fit actual circumstances when the time comes to act upon them, but the next General Election is not so far away as all that, and it is essential to have some plan of campaign ready even if details have to



be amended when the election comes.

A most important consideration is money. The amount that legally may be spent in every constituency is known, and previous experience will assist in reaching an estimate of how much is likely to be raised, so that it is practicable to prepare a budget immediately.

Estimates for the printing of the election address, window bills, posters, etc., and for the supply of election envelopes can be obtained. This information will assist in making a decision on such matters as whether an address is to be sent to each elector, or only to each family, and whether or not the address is to be the chief item of printed publicity, or if it is possible to publish a broadsheet as well.

## High Quality

If there is to be a broadsheet, it may be decided to economise on the address by printing in one colour only, and if there isn't, a really high-quality address may be the aim. A decision to have a broadsheet raises questions of who is to do the writing and who the display, where the illustrations are to come from, and who is to do the printing—all of them questions requiring an answer before the election starts.

Consideration of the number and kind of window bills also involves consideration of the members and supporters who will display them. No wise decision about posters can be taken without a knowledge of the availability of suitable sites.

So preparing a budget is not simply a matter of finance. How the available money is to be spent inevitably raises the problem of the whole strategy to

be followed in the election, the number of electors that have to be dealt with, the number of votes needed, where support lies, and how to transform support into votes.

Somebody should be doing this staff work now, and the members who will occupy key positions in the campaign are the best people to do it, with the intended Election Agent as the Chief of Staff.

Apart from this necessary planning of future activities, one practical job that can be undertaken immediately, because it has to do with registration and not with presenting a candidate, is the securing of postal votes for Labour supporters.

A method, tried with some success in by-elections, has been an appeal to Party members to supply on forms provided the names and addresses of anybody—relations, neighbours, workmates—known to them who they think *may* be entitled to a postal vote. The information obtained is followed up by members specially appointed, and often results in a substantial addition to the absent voters' list.

## Postal Votes

There will be little chance of obtaining postal votes for supporters during the election, because not only will there be so many other things clamouring for attention, but also the last date for the receipt of applications is as early as 12 days before polling day.

Though there has been some improvement in registering Labour postal voters in recent years, we still lag woefully behind the Tories in this matter and lose seats as a result.

August, when many routine activities are suspended, offers a splendid opportunity for a postal vote drive. Once the results begin to show, there will be a

# an Early Election ?

growing realisation of the importance of the job and a greater willingness to regard it as an essential part of normal local activity.

Expenditure on an election cannot be incurred except by the Election Agent and his formal appointment might be regarded as starting the election, but there is nothing to stop the local party buying and stocking material and selling it to the Election Agent at the appropriate time.

### Buy Envelopes

Envelopes can be purchased now when supplies are plentiful, but care must be taken to see that they are safely stored in a dry place. Probably it is too great a risk to start envelope addressing, because if the election is not fought on the current register, which remains in force until next spring, the deletions and additions which will have to be made may result in considerable waste and some confusion.

On the other hand, if the party can afford one of the cheap addressing machines now on the market, there would be a lot gained by preparing a stencil for each street in the constituency.

In addition to being ready to run off the envelopes when required, preparing the stencils would compel the working out of details of the number of electors and houses in each street, and this kind of information is essential to the proper planning of a campaign.

Canvass cards, calling-up pads and number-taking pads also can be ordered and stored.

### Election Parcel

A useful purchase is the election parcel of legal and other forms supplied by Head Office. An examination of these forms will give the nominated Election Agent a better idea of the requirements of his job even if he has taken the special Study Course for Election Agents.

Looked at as a whole, the running of a Parliamentary election is a pretty terrifying job. But if it is broken down into its essential parts and if the parts are then fitted into a thoroughly thought-out plan, not only does the task seem simpler, but it can act as a challenge and a stimulus.

Being prepared for the fight is itself a physical and moral asset of untold value.

**A. L. WILLIAMS**

## First Woman to be Councillor is Honoured

**A**FTER nearly fifty years' activity in the Labour movement in Middlesbrough, Mrs. Alice Schofield Coates has left the district. Recently, the Middlesbrough Labour Party gave a dinner in her honour.

A fighter for women's rights, Mrs. Schofield Coates joined the Women's Social and Political Union, in Manchester, as early as 1903. She was active in by-elections, crusading for women's suffrage, and this activity took her to North Yorkshire in 1910. Here she met and married Charles Coates, a leading member of the I.L.P., who shared her militant views—she spent a month in Holloway Prison following a deputation to Mr. Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, in 1909.

With her husband she played a prominent part in the public life of Middlesbrough. She helped to found the Middlesbrough Women's Council, an organisation that did much to care for the interests of working women. In 1919 she was elected to the town council, and became the first woman member, and two years later became a Magistrate. Since 1945 she has served as a co-opted member of the town's Educational and Libraries Committees.

At the dinner, Alderman Mrs. Burton, Middlesbrough's first woman Mayor, presented Mrs. Schofield Coates with a pen and pencil set, as a small token of the Labour Party's regard and affection. Incidentally, the dinner was held in the civic restaurant.

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Member's candidature at the next election.

While care must be exercised to avoid incurring election expenses, it should not be allowed to inhibit us to the point of inactivity. There is nothing to stop the candidate taking a leading part in our Party activities, or from being the main speaker at public meetings and publicising the fact. There is no prohibition or restriction on his writing letters to the Press or contributing articles in local journals on political issues of the day. The bar is on money being spent to promote the interests of the individual.

After all, we should be the last people to criticise this principle. We have fought throughout the centuries against wealth and privilege being used to exploit the electorate for personal ends.

The problem of election expenses would not be solved by laying down a specific date as to when election expenses commence (such as that laid down for the election time-table itself). To do so would enable the wealthy to spend large sums of money up to that date and thereby place less wealthy opponents at a great disadvantage. Further, the whole purpose and effect of putting a limit on the amount of money that can be spent at the election would be nullified.

The Committee on Electoral Law Reform, which reported in 1947, considered the question of incurring election expenses so important that they concluded their Report by re-printing a lengthy letter which appeared in *The Times* in 1929 on the subject. The writer, an authority on electoral law, underlined the views expressed by Baron Pollock and others. A pertinent paragraph read:

To sum it up, a candidate may, as I have pointed out, 'nurse' a constituency and hold meetings to advocate his political views; but if he avails himself of this opportunity to take active steps to promote his own personal cause, long before the actual election commences, by taking

all necessary steps to stabilise his position so as to enable him to start his campaign armed at all points, when the election does take place, then the expenses of such a 'preliminary canter' must undoubtedly be accounted for by such candidate as forming part of his election expenses.

## Improvement in Electors' Form

WORKING parties are now a common feature in industry and many of their recommendations have resulted in increased production and ease of operation.

'Organisation and Methods'—or O. & M., as it is popularly called in local government circles—has done the same in the non-productive services.

Now we see one result of a joint working party, representing local authorities, the Treasury and the Stationery Office. This party has considered, among other things, Form A—the form issued to householders by the electoral registration officers for the entry of those qualified to be electors.

As a result, the existing form has been revised. The main alteration is that of layout, and all the necessary instructions and notes of guidance are confined to one side of the form. The back is reserved for its despatch and return.

In addition, the wording has been revised, especially the notes of guidance. The size of the type has been increased and the text redrafted. The form is therefore more readable and understandable. It is claimed that the new format will facilitate the task of electoral registration officers in preparing an accurate register.

The new form will be issued by electoral registration officers in September for the compilation of the 1959 register of electors.

# On the Eve of an Election

Work to be undertaken before the start of the actual election campaign is described in this article. It is the fourth of a series of five explaining how the 'Reading' system works.

WHATEVER election it is, it's a thousand to one we want more workers (and cars) than we start with, and finding them is a high priority job. We begin (right at the start of the campaign) by listing those we've got. From his own knowledge and from the notes accumulated on the index cards, the District Manager makes out a list on forms supplied from the Central Office.

Useful notes have been made by the District Manager on the form, for instance, the fact that Mrs. Smith can and will canvass before the evening. Miss Jennie Lee is somebody who, the District Manager knows, will work, but he doesn't at the moment know what she'll do. She goes on the list, nevertheless. So, indeed, does any supporter who *might* work. Better to have to

cross some off than to miss a possible worker.

Let's suppose that the list is the complete one for that polling district at the outset. Obviously it isn't enough, but we expected that. The number will grow if we remember that getting the help of our own supporters is Aim No. 1.

We don't set about it by sending out a list of jobs to all members (or other supporters) and expecting them to fill up a form and return it. And we don't do it by appealing at meetings for potential helpers 'to get in touch with the secretary'.

The job can be done both at meetings and on the doorstep. But both ways it's got to be done systematically and by us. We use a form, it's true

ELECTION WORKERS' LIST			GENERAL ELECTION						NOVEMBER, 1958			
P.D. : DON 1												
Name and Address	Car before P.D.	Car on P.D.	Canvassing	Addressing	Delivering	Typing	Window Bill	Knocking-up	Committee Room work	Number-taking	Messengers	Driving
Mr. Jack Fletcher .. 27 Brightside Avenue			x	x	x		x	x				
Mrs. Ivy Brown .. 17 Market Place Square				x		Has own machine x	x	Evening only x	x			
Mr. Fred Brown .. 17 Market Place Square												x
Mr. James Phillips .. 14 South West Road	x	All day x					x					
Mr. Ivor Jones-Smith .. 15 South West Road		Driver wanted										
Mrs. Freda Smith .. 28 Great Street			Available day time x			No machine x	x	x	x			
Miss Jennie Lee .. 14A Smith Square												



but we don't ask the potential helper to fill it in. We make it a part of our White Card canvass and, at public meetings, when the chairman asks for volunteers to do *specific jobs*, which he describes, we have stewards ready to take the names and addresses as the hands go up.

ELECTION WORKERS		P.D. DON I	
NOTE TO CANVASSER : Please put a cross against the job or jobs the supporter will do in the campaign and add all other useful information possible.			
Name and address of supporter willing to help: Mr. John Rees, 154 Armthorpe Road			
Jobs		Canvasser's Notes	
Canvassing .. ..			
Addressing .. ..	X	Time at Week-ends	
Delivering .. ..			
Driving .. ..			
Use of car before P.D.			
Use of car on P.D. ..	X	6 p.m. onwards	
Typing .. ..			
Window Bill .. ..	X		
Knocking-up .. ..			
Committee Room work			
Number-taking ..			
Messenger .. ..			

The forms come into the District Manager from the canvassers (or to the agent in the case of a public meeting, and he sends them on to the District Managers). Every time one comes in, the District Manager transfers the information to his list. After the election he'll also make notes on the index cards.

The use of the workers shown on the lists is the job of the ward organiser, in consultation with the District Managers. He needs to keep a close watch on the lists for three reasons:

- (a) because otherwise he may be missing the services of a new recruit;
- (b) because one polling district may be very short of workers—a situation which calls for a transfer from

- another polling district for long enough to find more; and
- (c) because some of the entries will indicate action. For instance, on seeing the last entry on the list illustrated, he'll want to go and see Miss Jennie Lee to find out what she'll do. He'll also want to arrange for Mr. Fred Brown to drive Mr. Ivor Jones's car.

When should we start canvassing in a marginal election campaign? The answer is 'Early'—at the beginning of April if it's the annual local elections and as soon as the election is announced, if it's a Parliamentary election or a local by-election.

Why? (1) Because we can't run the election as it should be run till we've found some more workers. (2) Because the closing date for Postal Vote applications is on or about Nomination Day. (3) Because some of the Buffs (and any Greens left) will turn out to be Tories and the nearer we get to polling day the less we want to disturb them.

### First Canvass

The aim is to finish a first election canvass by Nomination Day (about a fortnight before polling day). By a first canvass is meant a visit to the homes of all the Whites, Buffs and any Greens (no Blues).

The 'outs' are covered in a second canvass after Nomination Day, timed to be completed one week before polling day.

To remind Labour voters there's an election coming and it's important to vote is one purpose of the White Card election canvass. But not the most important one—because, after all, we can do that in other ways than by door-knocking.

These are the primary aims: (1) To find workers and cars and supporters who will put up window-bills. (2) To fix up Postal Votes. (3) To trace removals. (4) To check the White Cards before the knocking-up lists are prepared.

The canvasser first picks up from

the District Manager a folder containing: Canvass books for the streets to be canvassed; Postal Vote cards; Removal forms; Election Workers' forms.

Because of these four purposes, this canvass is absolutely vital to success and it's time well spent for canvassers to sit down for half an hour before starting out to discuss exactly what to do about various situations, especially if there's a not-so-experienced canvasser amongst them. Just to make sure that everybody is clear about such things as:

**NO REPLY.** The canvasser enters 'out' and the date on the card.

**REMOVALS.** The procedure is just the same as that for non-election canvassing previously described.

**CHECKING SUPPORTERS.** If the elector is still 'White', the canvasser enters the date only on the card. If he's Tory or Doubtful he enters the date and a heavy note, e.g. 'NOW TORY'. He'll be changed to a Blue Card.

**POSTAL VOTES.** Once the politics of the elector are confirmed, the more positive action begins. Just the question: 'Are you likely to be unable to get to the polling station?' will sometimes reveal grounds for a Postal Vote claim.

**WORKERS, CARS, WINDOW-BILLS.** Supporters never mind being asked to help, especially when there's a long list of jobs to choose from. There's no harm done at all by running through the list, item by item. Many an unexpected car, or a window-bill site, or a street or two of delivery has been fixed up like this, especially with the elector who says, 'Of course, I'm Labour. Can't understand how a working man (or woman) can be anything else.' A few minutes of cordiality of this sort soon produces the opportunity to pop the question.

Obviously, in a marginal election campaign, the Buffs left in the index are very important — especially those who are in the process of making up their minds or changing them. *In all*

*probability, they'll do this by polling day.*

This kind of canvassing is a job for specially suitable workers. In a General Election, it's done on a constituency basis and in the annual local elections the ward organiser gets together a small team — the candidate, Labour councillors and other knowledgeable members prepared to engage in reasoned argument.

The cards are marked by the canvassers:

1. With the date only if the elector definitely won't say or won't vote (this means he won't be re-canvassed);
2. with the date and politics if he's now on one side or the other (and the District Manager will change over to White or Blue);
3. with the date and the word 're-canvass', if he's still Doubtful — *together with a note about any particular point the elector may be doubtful about;*
4. with the date and the word 'out' if he's out.

When all Buff addresses have been visited, the team starts on the second canvass, this time visiting only those marked 'Re-canvass' and 'out'.

By the time the canvass is finished, most of the Buffs will be on White or Blue cards and the rest will be 'persistent doubtfuls'.

Of course, in the Buff card canvass are included any Greens that are still left in the index.

(1)	
102 NEWTOWN PLACE	
MARTIN, NORMAN	} 18.4.58 Now Labour
MARTIN, SHEILA	
(BUFF CARD)	

When the District Manager has the cards returned to him, he'll change the above card to White. The same card with 'Now Tory' on it would, of course, mean



a change to Blue. No re-canvass involved in either case.

(2)

14 CRESSINGHAM ROAD

THOMPSON, ANDREW	}	18.4.58
THOMPSON, MURIEL E.		Out
ELLIS, WINIFRED		Now Labour 18.4.58

(BUFF CARD)

This is a re-canvass case. Winifred goes on to a White card marked 'Also previous card'; the other two stay on the Buff card, marked 'Also next card' and are covered in the second canvass.

(3)

ALSO NEXT CARD

14 CRESSINGHAM ROAD

THOMPSON, ANDREW	}	18.4.58
THOMPSON, MURIEL E.		Out—25.4.58 Still doubtful (Council Rents)
ELLIS, WINIFRED		Now Labour 18.4.58

(BUFF CARD)

The same card after a re-canvass. And another canvass is necessary. These electors are 'genuine Doubtfuls' who ought to be talked with by somebody who knows all about Council rents, particularly any recent developments.

### Postal Voters

About a week before polling day, the Returning Officer issues a list of the registered electors in each polling district who have been allowed a Postal or Proxy vote in the election. The agent sends the list out to the District Managers immediately, and each transfers the information to his index cards.

Let's suppose, for instance, that LEWIS, JOHN J. is shown on the Absent Voters List as having a *Postal Vote* in the 1958 local elections. The District Manager writes PV/L.E.1958 opposite the name on the card, so:

(4)

116A SHIPLEY STREET

LEWIS, JOHN J. PV/L.E. 1958

LEWIS, MILLICENT

(WHITE CARD)

If, instead, the name appeared on the Absent Voters List as having a Postal Vote for the General Election of 1955, the note would be: PV/G.E.1955. And if this had been a *Proxy vote* instead of a Postal Vote, the entry would have been: Proxy/L.E.1956.

This information is transferred to the cards because these voters can't vote at a polling station in person and we want to keep them off the knocking-up lists. What do we want on a knocking-up list? The number, name and address of every Labour voter who can vote at the polling station and hasn't moved from his registered address.

When the canvass is completed about a week before polling day, the District Manager takes a copy of the register and goes through his cards, crossing off the register in pencil:

1. *All electors other than Whites;*
2. *All Whites marked 'Y', if the election is before 2nd October;*
3. *All Whites marked 'L', if it's a Parliamentary election;*
4. *All Whites who have moved from the registered address.*
5. *All Whites stated on the cards to be dead;*
6. *All Whites marked 'Proxy' for that election;*
7. *All Whites marked 'PV' for that election.*

The electors left on the register are all Labour voters who can vote in person at the polling station and haven't moved from the registered address. The next job is to transfer them to the knocking-up lists, copying the register, but only showing sufficient Christian names to indicate whether Man or Woman. It's a waste of time to show more.

It's mainly for this purpose that we include typists in the list of helpers in the campaign. For speed, clarity and economy, the lists are better typed,

although they can be quite satisfactory if hand-written in block capitals.

The lists are 4 in. wide by 10 in. long, and take a maximum of about 50 names. Small streets can be done two or even three to a list, *but only if the streets are close together.*

The District Manager crosses off **ALL WHITES WHO HAVE MOVED FROM THE REGISTERED ADDRESS.** This is because we don't want to waste time or tempers in knocking-up people who don't live there any more. At the same time as he crosses these White Removals off the register, the District Manager transfers the information on the card to separate lists (supplied from the central office).

If Blenheim ward is one with three polling districts, there will be such a list for each of three polling stations. The ward organiser collects the lists from the District Managers about a week before polling day and organises a visit to each of the addresses where no time has been stated.

### Arrange Transport

In some cases, electors will say they can and will get to the polling station without being transported. But, wherever possible, it's best to get a time from them for picking-up and, in any case, all of them stay on the removals list.

From this point onwards, dealing with removals is not a polling district (or even a ward) matter, because done this way, it involves a very expensive waste of car-time. It's a central job, and something of a jig-saw puzzle.

To begin with, the ward organisers send in to the agent all the polling district Lists of Removals. He works out a removals schedule for each car available for transporting removed electors. In a marginal Parliamentary election, the schedules must provide for *all* the removals to be handled, but in the local elections the agent will cut out the removal cases in non-marginal wards, unless they happen to be cases that can be handled on a journey when a car would otherwise be empty.

The election address should reach electors during the fortnight before polling day.

For Parliamentary elections, the addressing and envelope-filling will be done in the Central Committee Rooms during the election campaign and delivery

is by free 'Election Communication' post.

For local elections, with no free post, there's the additional job of organising a hand-delivery. But addressing is less of a rush, because most of the job can be done before the ward organiser receives the supply of election addresses or even before the election starts.

All that's necessary is a supply of gummed labels, which fit a space to be left on the election address. The detail can be inserted any time after 15th February, when the new register is out, leaving out 'Y' electors, of course.

NAME : M/S June E. Summers

ADDRESS : 27 Newlyn Place

POLLING No. W/2154

POLLING STATION: Westacre School

When the election addresses are received, all that remains is to stick the labels on the space provided, *except that something has to be done about removals.*

By this time, we've got a removals list. The labels for all electors on the list are cancelled and new labels made out showing the new address. True, the list only shows Labour removals, but it isn't worth spending time on re-addressing the rest.

The election address is the only propaganda which should be aimed at Tory voters during an election. And that only because, if we don't deliver the election address to everybody, we give the Tories a propaganda point.

Just as they're better left alone in election canvassing, so in propaganda work we don't waste time, money and effort in doing the Tories' job for them. For instance—loudspeakers. Near to and on polling day, loudspeakers are very valuable for gingering up Labour voters. And that's what they should be used for.

### Loudspeaker Tours

When a loudspeaker goes out to a particular ward, a list of streets goes with it. The streets shown are all the streets in that ward where over 50 per cent of electors are 'White', and the list is headed '**NO OTHER STREETS SHOULD BE VISITED**'.

This is meant to be observed quite strictly. We shan't convert any Tories with the loudspeaker. What we *shall* do



is to cause more electors to vote than would otherwise vote. *So they must be more ours than theirs.*

Apart from the election address, the same sort of technique should be applied to all printed propaganda in an election as to loudspeaker work.

The later in the campaign such propaganda can be done the better. And the more selective it can be, the better, too. Suppose, for instance, that, near polling day, a leading Tory councillor declares that, if he had his way, all building of council houses would cease. The electors to reach with a leaflet on this are *Labour voters* in old parts of the town where many people are hoping for re-housing.

We select the streets where this applies and deliver only to Labour voters there. This can be ensured either through the knocking-up lists, if they're done, or by using the cards. It isn't a very long job, once the streets have been selected, to go a little further with selection and make sure that only Labour voters get this propaganda.

### Selective Propaganda

Obviously the case mentioned above of the vociferous and indiscreet Tory councillor is only one of many possible examples. Selection will be different in other cases, but one thing is always the same—that *only Labour voters must get this propaganda*. Every time we put an election leaflet in a Tory letter-box, we're reminding convinced Tories to vote.

'Window-bill' is one of the items on the Election Workers' form carried by canvassers because the window-bill is certainly our best form of 'display' propaganda. It has three big advantages: 1. It's cheap, compared with using hoarding posters; 2. It implies a specially personal message from within the elector's house; 3. Because, obviously, only Labour voters will put up Labour window-bills, they're most in evidence in Labour areas. There's a degree of selection.

### Use Window-Bills

No. 3 can be carried a stage further. It isn't a bad idea to select, say, the five main roads on a heavily Labour housing estate and deliver a window-bill, with the election address, to every Labour house in these roads.

If canvassers have made a point of mentioning window-bills, quite a lot of these will go up and, by reminding electors for a week or so before polling day, will help to get our votes for us. Those that don't go up will stay on top of the sideboard and remind the Labour occupiers.

One thing we must keep in mind about window-bills is advantage No. 1 above. It doesn't pay to be too 'stingy' with them. The more we dish out—to Labour electors in Labour areas—the more we shall get displayed. The more we get displayed the easier it will be to get out our voters.

P.D. : BLENHEIM 2				REMOVALS LIST			
POLLING STATION : Castle Comprehensive School							
Elect. No.	Name			New Address			Pick-up Time
3	Williams, Fred	..	..	124 Hanover Way	..	..	6.30
4	Williams, Luvona	..	..	ditto	..	..	2.30
62	Davidson, Winifred	..	..	16 Gratwick Road	..	..	10.0
69	Jones, Eric	..	..	153 Castle Street	..	..	10.15
145	Michigan, Harry	..	..	17 Alexandra Road	..	..	
146	Michigan, William	..	..	ditto	..	..	
147	Michigan, William T.	..	..	ditto	..	..	
332	Knight, John	..	..	16 Hanover Way	..	..	1.30
333	Knight, June	..	..	ditto	..	..	



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